

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TANANA 00310 231609Z

42

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCS-03 SCA-01 L-02 H-01 EB-07 SS-15

SP-02 NSC-05 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PRS-01 PM-03

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R 211130Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY TANANARIVE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6966

C O N F I D E N T I A L TANANARIVE 0310

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CASC, MA (REPPAS, GEORGE)

SUBJECT: W/W REPPAS

SUMMARY: REPPAS REMAINS AT EMBASSY AND IS FOLLOWING CHECK-
IN HROCEDURES PRESCRIBED BY GOMR AUTHORITIES. PRESENT SITUATION
IN MADAGASCAR MAY IMPROVE CHANCES FOR EARLY RELEASE FOR
REPPAS BUT EMBASSY HAS HAD ALSO TO DISSUADE HIM FROM PLOTTING

ESCAPE ATTEMPT. END SUMMARY.

1. AS OF 21 FEB REPPAS REMAINS AT EMBASSY. HE CONTINUES TO
CHECK IN DAILY WITH POLICE. BACOPOULOS IS IN CUSTODY OF
ARMY TO WHOM HE REPORTED IMMEDIATELY UPON HIS DEPARTURE FROM
PRISON. REPPAS, APPARENTLY BECAUSE HE WAS IN HIDING FOR
TWO DAYS DURING FIGHTING AND BECAUSE HE REPORTED TO CIVIL
AUTHORITIES WHEN THAT BECAME POSSIBLE, HAS BEEN TREATED
DIFFERENTLY FROM BACOPOULOS BUT THE SAME AS MOST OTHER
PRISONERS. SOME FRENCH PRISONERS CONNECTED WITH COMPAGNIE
MARSEILLAISE CASE, HAVE BEEN TAKEN INTO CUSTODY AGAIN, ACCORDING TO
REPPAS.

2. EMBASSY HAS ATTEMPTED TO OBTAIN ASSURANCE FROM GOMR
THROUGH FONOFF AND MIN OF INTERIOR THAT REPPAS WILL BE
PERMITTED REMAIN AT EMBASSY UNTIL MARCH 4 WHEN SUPREME
COURT DECISION ON HIS CASE DUE. GOMR RESPONSE HAS BEEN
NONCOMMITTAL.

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PAGE 02 TANANA 00310 231609Z

3. IN TERMS OF CURRENT SITUATION IN MADAGASCAR THERE ARE

SOME DEVELOPMENTS THAT MAY, IN GENERAL, FAVOR EARLY RELEASE FOR REPPAS. GOMR IS PREOCCUPIED WITH QUESTIONS OF INTERNAL SECURITY, CENTRAL PRISON IS IN DISARRAY, AND RESAMPA HAS BEEN ARRESTED. REPPAS FEELS LATTER MOVE IS TO HIS BENEFIT BECAUSE HE BELIEVES AGM CASE WAS DESIGNED, AT LEAST IN PART, TO DISCREDIT RESAMPA. NOW THAT RESAMPA HAS BEEN ALMOST TOTALLY DISCREDITED, REPPAS SEES HIMSELF AS LESS IMPORTANT TO GOMR. EMBASSY, HOWEVER, SEES OTHER POSSIBILITY NOT MENTIONED TO REPPAS, WHICH IS THAT GOMR MAY WANT REPPAS AT HAND IF IT ATTEMPTS TO TIE RESAMPA DIRECTLY TO AGM CASE.

4. SEVERAL SPECIFIC POSSIBILITIES ALSO EXIST NOW FOR RELEASE OF REPPAS, OR PROBABLY MORE PRECISELY HIS EXPULSION FROM MADAGASCAR. FIRST, SUPREME COURT COULD DECIDE IN HIS FAVOR. IT IS MORE LIKELY, HOWEVER, THAT COURT WOULD DECIDE IN HIS FAVOR ONLY PARTIALLY, BUT EVEN THIS MAY GENERATE FAVORABLE CONSIDERATION OF LIBERTE CONDITIONNELLE WHEN HALF HIS SENTENCE SERVED ON APRIL 30. ANOTHER POSSIBILITY IS GENERAL AMNESTY FOR PRISONERS WITH LESS THAN TWO YEARS TO SERVE WHICH REPPAS SAYS IS CURRENTLY RUMORED. REPPAS HAS TWO YEARS EIGHT MONTHS TO SERVE BUT HE MIGHT BE ADDED TO LIST SIMPLY TO REMOVE HIM AS PROBLEM FOR GOMR. FINALLY, THERE IS POSSIBILITY OF SUCCESSFUL APPROACH TO NEW HEAD OF STATE GENERAL ANDRIAMAHAZO SUCH AS THAT MADE TO GENERAL RAMANANTSOA.

5. CLEARLY, IN REPPAS' MIND ANOTHER POSSIBILITY EXISTS IF ALL ELSE FAILS OR APPEARS LIKELY -- TO ESCAPE. DESPITE CAREFUL REVIEW OF HIS POSITION WITH DCM WHEN HE ARRIVED AT EMBASSY FEB 14 COVERING POINTS ABOVE, ONE HOUR LATER REPPAS APPROACHED NASA/BENDIX EMPLOYEE TO ENLIST HIS ASSISTANCE IN ESCAPE FROM ISLAND. IN LATER FRANK DISCUSSION WITH DCM HE ADMITTED HE WAS SERIOUSLY CONSIDERING ESCAPE IF OTHER ALTERNATIVES FAIL. DCM INFORMED REPPAS THAT IN OPTING TO RESIDE AT EMBASSY HE ALSO INCURRED OBLIGATION TO PURSUE LEGAL AVENUES OPEN TO HIM. HE WAS TOLD, MOREOVER, THAT
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PAGE 03 TANANA 00310 231609Z

RISKS INHERENT IN ESCAPE PLAN ARE GREATLY MAGNIFIED BY CURRENT SECURITY SITUATION. REPPAS, WHO SAYS HE IS PILOT, APPEARED TO THINK ILLEGAL FLIGHT TO PORT WOULD BE POSSIBLE, FOLLOWED BY ESCAPE BY BOAT. DANGERS OF SUCH ATTEMPT

POINTED OUT TO REPPAS IN UNEQUIVOCAL TERMS, PARTICULARLY IN AFTERMATH OF AGM PLANE INCIDENT. REPPAS AGREED, BUT WITHOUT CONVICTION.

6. REPPAS IS NOT UNDER GUARD AT EMBASSY BUT HE IS REQUIRED

TO KEEP US INFORMED OF HIS MOVEMENTS. EMBASSY WILL REMAIN
ALERT TO TACTICAL ADVANTAGES VIS-A-VIS GOMR AS DEVELOPMENTS
UNFOLD IN CONTEXT OF OUR OVERALL STRATEGY OF PURSUING
LEGAL AVENUES OPEN TO HIM. REPPAS, AT THE MOMENT, IS IN
APPARENT SINCERE AGREEMENT WITH EMBASSY APPROACH, BUT
MESSAGE FROM JEFFRIES SUPPORTING LEGAL APPROACH MAY SERVE
TO STEEL HIS RESOLVE.
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